

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16), Chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry, today cosponsored the bipartisan “Preserving America’s Family Farm Act,” HR 4157, which would prevent the Department of Labor (DOL) from enacting controversial new restrictions on youth working on family farms.

“The family farm is a cornerstone of our nation’s economy and food supply, and it is a way of life for farmers across Florida and the country,” Rooney said. “The unreasonable, overreaching mandates proposed by the Department of Labor would severely restrict the ability of young people to work on family farms, and it would threaten generations of farm tradition and culture.

“Our bill would uphold the family farm so that young people can continue to learn important work ethics and skills while helping their families prosper.”

HR 4157 would prevent the Obama Administration from implementing its proposed rules to restrict family farm operations. The new mandates would prohibit youth under the age of 18 from being near certain animals without adult supervision, participating in common livestock practices like vaccinating, handling most animals more than six months old, operating farm machinery over 20 PTO horsepower, completing tasks at elevations over six feet high, and working at stockyards and grain and feed facilities. The language of the proposed rule is so specific it would even ban youth from operating a battery powered screwdriver or a pressurized garden hose. These restrictions would also severely limit participation in 4-H and FFA activities as well as farm safety classes.

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